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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001734

SIPDIS

LABOR FOR DOL/ILAB TFAULKNER

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: TEACHER'S STRIKE ENDS IN KINSHASA, CONTINUES IN PROVINCES

REF: A. KINSHASA 1502

[B.](#) KINSHASA 1672

Classified By: EconCouns G. Groth: Reason: 1.4 b/d

¶1. (C) Summary. Striking teachers in public elementary, secondary, and professional schools in Kinshasa agreed to go back to work beginning Monday, October 17. The final GDRC salary offer was accepted in principle and a dozen presidential decrees that promoted approximately 6000 higher-level teachers and administrators in Kinshasa helped to seal the deal. Their fellow union members in the provinces, however, have not followed their example and remain away from classrooms. End summary.

¶2. (C) Public school teachers from the elementary and secondary school levels have been on strike since September 5 (ref A). Six weeks into the strike, on Friday, October 14, the two striking public teachers' unions (SYECO and SYNECAT) announced that they would accept in principle the GDRC offer of between USD 50 and 100 per month, to be paid beginning on or about October 20. From all appearances, the membership has responded in Kinshasa, where all schools are open and well-attended on Monday, October 17.

¶3. (C) Part of the GDRC package that eventually convinced the unions to return to work was a series of presidential decrees, a dozen in all, that were announced on Friday, October 14. These decrees promoted some 6000 union members in Kinshasa, all at the high end of the new pay scale. There was an indication that the promotions would continue at a steady rate to cover members outside Kinshasa and at lower administrative levels.

¶4. (C) Public school attendance outside of the capital was poor, as teachers' union members in the provinces did not rush to accept the GDRC offer. As noted last week (ref B), the public school teachers in the provinces are unhappy with the disparities between bonuses paid in Kinshasa (for example, transport) and those in the provinces, and they have now noted that the decrees so far only concern higher level teachers in Kinshasa.

¶5. (C) Comment: Progress has been made in resolving the dispute which has kept so many children out of school, but only Kinshasa seems back to normal. GDRC offer, plus the promotions accorded, will do to the 2006 budget as more teachers are paid higher salaries at higher pay grades. The spin-off effect on other civil servants is something to be closely watched. We expect the IMF team, which is in the DRC this week to look at the 2006 budget, is already focusing on the effects of these salary increases. End comment.

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